



Achieving cost savings through effective IT Asset Management



case study : Norwich Union Insurance



Discover how Norwich Union made substantial six figure savings through implementing a fully integrated IT Asset Management solution

Norwich Union and Axios partner to deliver effective IT Asset Management

When Norwich Union was looking for an IT Asset Management product set to help it gain tighter control of its IT infrastructure, its solution of choice was an end-to-end service offering by Axios Systems consisting of its core product, **assyst** and Centennial Discovery. Not only would these integrated products meet its demanding and evolving product requirements - but Axios Systems was able to offer a 'partnership' approach to the entire vendor relationship - key to ensuring overall success of the project.

Background

Norwich Union is the largest insurer in the UK. It is the leading long-term savings provider with a life market share of about 12% and nearly 7 million customers. It is also the largest general insurer with an overall market share of 14% and 4.3 million customers. Norwich Union insures one in five households, one in seven motor vehicles and more than 800,000 businesses in the UK.

Norwich Union is part of Aviva, the world's fifth-largest insurance group which has around £273 billion of assets under management. Aviva has 60,000 employees serving 30 million customers worldwide.

Norwich Union Central Services is a distinct area of the business, focusing solely on providing support services to Norwich Union across a variety of areas that include IT, Property & Facilities Management and Printing, Distribution & Purchasing.

Norwich Union Central Services required a fully integrated Asset Management solution to facilitate cradle-to-grave management of the organisation's extensive IT asset portfolio. Its distributed assets include some 47,000 desktops, laptops, network computers and over 2000 Intel servers. These assets are widely distributed in many locations across the country with hardware assets in Norwich Union main centres, regions and branches, data centres, insurance broker offices, storage facilities as well as in employees' homes. In addition to this, a high number of assets are being utilised by the many mobile Norwich Union employees.

Driving this requirement was the Norwich Union IT Infrastructure Standardisation Programme – an initiative introduced to ensure that the thousands of employees across the country were provided with a standard PC build, standard software versions and common network. Through implementation of this programme, Norwich Union hoped to achieve a number of asset related benefits, including reduced asset support costs.



over

the solution was **assyst**



case study :
NORWICH UNION INSURANCE

“The **assyst** solution has acted as the key enabler for significant six figure financial savings by the ability to track assets, their specification and suitability for re-use.”

“We also chose **assyst** with the knowledge that it was so much more than simply an Asset Management tool and it delivered immediate and long term functionality with minimal customisation.”

Richard Oliver
IT Supply Chain Manager

“To ensure success of the standardisation programme, we needed to know what assets we had, where they were located, how fit for purpose they were, how much they were worth, and how effectively they were supporting our business,” said Richard Oliver, IT Supply Chain Manager at Norwich Union.

The Solution

“Whichever Asset Management solution we selected to support this programme needed to be fully fit for purpose and capable of growing and developing to meet future business requirements and grow into additional technology areas,” continued Richard.

The requirement therefore was not just for the supply of a toolset, but a structured plan for pilot, rollout and ongoing management processes and procedures.

After rigorous assessment of many potential suppliers’ capabilities and their solutions, Norwich Union selected Axios Systems and its proposed integrated end-to-end service, consisting of its IT Service Management product, **assyst** and Centennial Discovery as the best overall fit for its needs.

“To us, the vendor we selected was as important as the product. It was essential for us to be able to work in close partnership with the supplier of such a business critical application, and ensure a strong long lasting partnership could easily be achieved and maintained,” said Richard.

assyst by Axios Systems is an award-winning IT Service Management solution, developed from inception around Best Practice and ITIL (IT Infrastructure Library) principles. In addition, it offers a unique lifecycle approach to IT Service Management through the integration of all ITIL processes in an out-of-the-box solution with a single underlying Configuration Management Database (CMDB).

The **assyst** CMDB was able to offer Norwich Union much more than a simple registry of its physical assets - it also provided it with an accurate inventory of IT resources and the relationships between them.

To populate the **assyst** CMDB, Axios Systems implemented Centennial Discovery as part of its end-to-end solution offering - an automated asset and software-tracking tool. **assystDiscovery** from Axios integrates comprehensive, accurate asset information directly into the Norwich Union **assyst** CMDB from Centennial Discovery.

“We also chose **assyst** with the knowledge that it was so much more than simply an Asset Management tool and it delivered immediate and long term functionality with minimal customisation. Axios were also able to offer proven integration to the Centennial asset tracking tool with **assystDiscovery**,” continued Richard. “This meant we’d be implementing our standardisation programme based on asset facts, not assumptions.”

Richard continued, “Throughout the meetings and product demonstrations with Axios Systems, it was clear that they were in touch with their customers’ requirements, had a good appreciation of service expectations of the product, and the level of account management required to facilitate a partnership of this scale – something which was very important to us, as we wanted to work closely with our vendor of choice.”

The Implementation

The plan was to logically phase the implementation, initially focusing on Norwich Union’s distributed and midrange platforms, with plans to expand the solution to manage network components and data surrounding mainframe systems in the second phase.

To ensure a successful implementation of **assyst**, Norwich Union worked in close partnership with consultants and technical specialists from the Axios Global Services Group to deliver the first phase of its Asset Management project - an initial inventory management solution.

This first phase was centred on the population and building of the **assyst** Configuration Management Database (CMDB) using Centennial Discovery and the integration power of **assystDiscovery**.

The **assyst** CMDB offered Norwich Union the ability to record a wealth of technical, financial, user and relationship information for each asset – vital, as the Norwich Union IT estate was made up of a very diverse portfolio in terms of equipment type, location, Operating System and network infrastructure.

After successful implementation of the first phase and with further ongoing support from Axios Global Services, the next phase started to successfully deliver virtually the full Asset Management requirements of Norwich Union.

The partnership approach adopted by Norwich Union and Axios has worked well, and the deliverables to date now include: asset depreciation and warranty replacement forecasting, feeds for unitary charge back, feed to the groups IT fixed asset register and base data to support software entitlement and move towards Configuration Management.

Norwich Union still has more work to do, particularly in the areas of midrange platforms and software mapping – but have a defined plan in place to work with Axios to ensure all its goals are achieved.

Benefits

Norwich Union has experienced a number of benefits thanks to its Asset Management programme and **assyst**.

One of the most significant benefits achieved through the implementation of **assyst** is that of superior asset visibility. Norwich Union Central Services now has the first estate-wide view of all its distributed assets - especially valuable in tracking the dynamics of the changing estate as a result of the standardisation programme. This has also been highly valuable in providing support for audits.

“The **assyst** solution has acted as the key enabler for significant six figure financial savings by the ability to track assets, their specification and suitability for re-use,” said Richard. He continued, “This re-use not only services business growth, but also allows us to identify kit of higher specification that can be fed in the UK wide standardisation programme preventing unnecessary spend.”

Benefits

- Tighter control of IT infrastructure
- Removal of IT obsolescence
- Reduced IT cost of ownership
- Support for software audits
- Better use of IT resources through asset re-use
- Improved IT user satisfaction
- Adoption of Best Practice
- Improved staff efficiency



more >



Benefits & The Future

The re-use of assets has thrown up some interesting challenges to Norwich Union – one of which being staff reaction to receiving what they consider to be ‘second-hand’ equipment. “To overcome this reluctance, support has been gained from the Key Buyers in each business to promote the re-utilisation. In order to lessen the negativity a new policy to clean all reutilised equipment prior to issue was adopted which was well received by the customer base,” continued Richard.

In addition to this, the information held on the **assyst** CMDB helps Norwich Union identify assets suitable for disposal when they are below the standards defined for economical and technological use.

With stock levels more closely aligned to industry standards, Norwich Union was able to expand its in-house services to base building of desktop and laptops - a task that was previously carried out externally. Through bringing this task in-house, a further six figure financial saving - over and above those mentioned earlier was made.

“Through the implementation of **assyst**, we have saved the business in the region of a seven figure sum,” said Richard. “This new service also feeds the internal chargeback mechanism for the deployed technology allowing billing on actual, rather than assumed volumes, as well as looking towards being the primary feed for the Group Fixed Asset register for the items under its management,” he concluded.

The Future

The ever-increasing and proven value of the Asset Management service and the **assyst** product is now acting as a springboard to migrate more of Norwich Union’s IT services towards a Best Practice and ITIL aligned model.

This has already seen Norwich Union adopt Change processes for hardware and software installation, as well as some early adoption for Incident Management for the central IT Service Desk and workflow for user administration.

Plans for the year ahead show yet further expansion of the use of **assyst** for Incident, Problem, Change and Configuration Management. In addition to this, further benefit towards the asset financial management for depreciation, warranty replacement forecasting as well as the potential for direct correlation of configuration items to support contract and volume license agreements – allowing Norwich Union to experience the full benefits that Best Practice and ITIL can bring to its organisation.

“**assyst** is not only an IT Asset Management solution – it’s an ITIL Service Management toolset in a box upon which to implement the revised processes, procedures, culture and services derived from an ITIL aligned operational organisation. We’re looking forward to making the most of the product functionality in the future and working together with Axios to ensure we maximise the benefits,” said Richard.

Australia

Belgium

Canada

Cyprus

France

Germany

The Netherlands

UK

USA



"The cost savings of £3 million that we received as a result of one software audit, far exceeded our expectations."

